

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TRIAL OF 1967 COUP LEADERS PRODUCES EVIDENCE
OF NON-INVOLVEMENT OF U.S., FORMER STRONGMAN
IOANNIDES DENIES U.S. INVOLVEMENT

REF: ATHENS 5845

1. THE TRIAL OF THE 1967 COUP LEADERS CONTINUES TO GRIND AHEAD, THE PRINCIPAL ITEM OF NOTE FOR THE UNITED STATES BEING TESTIMONY BY THE HEAD OF THE GREEK CIA (KYP) AT THE TIME OF THE COUP, KIRIAKOS PAPAGEORGOPOULOS, TO THE EFFECT THAT ON THE MORNING OF THE COUP, U.S. AMBASSADOR TALBOT DID NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THE COUP LEADER. ACCORDING TO PAPAGEORGOPOULOS, TALBOT SENT A "NOTE" THROUGH KYP ASKING THAT HE, TALBOT, BE PUT IN TOUCH WITH THE COUP'S "STRONG MAN". THIS TESTIMONY SEEMS SUCH PRIMA FACIA EVIDENCE OF U.S. INNOCENCE IN THE COUP THAT ONE LEFTIST PAPER, WHICH HAS PERSISTENTLY PLACED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COUP AT THE U.S. DOOR, HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE TALBOT MESSAGE WAS MERELY A COVER STORY DESIGNED TO ESTABLISH A U.S. ALIBI.

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2. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, FORMER JUNTA STRONG MAN

DIMITRIOS IOANNIDES HAS, IN WRITING, DENIED CONSPIRATORIAL TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE CIA. IOANNIDES MADE HIS DENIAL IN A WRITTEN INTERVIEW WITH A LOCAL PAPER, WHICH, INTER ALIA, ASKED, "THEY ACCUSE YOU OF BEING A FRIEND OF THE AMERICANS AND A TOOL OF THE CIA. IS THIS TRUE OR HAVE YOU BEEN THEIR VICTIM?" IOANNIDES RESPONDED, "WITH THE AMERICANS I HAVE HAD NEITHER SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP NOR SPECIAL ENMITY. AND NO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CIA. I HAVE NOT BEEN A VICTIM."

3. AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE INTERVIEW IOANNIDES SOUGHT TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS PAST ACTIONS STATING, "WHAT I DID, I CONSIDER PROPER."

4. FOR THE PRESENT AT LEAST, IOANNIDES CONTINUES TO WRAP HIMSELF IN THE FLAG OF GREEK PATRIOTISM, STATING IN THE INTERVIEW, "I FEAR THE TURKS, THAT IS WHY I WILL NOT TALK." ALMOST CERTAINLY IOANNIDES WISHES THIS STATEMENT TO BE READ AS MEANING HE DOES NOT WISH TO DIVIDE THE GREEK MILITARY AT A TIME OF NATIONAL PERIL.

5. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS PERHAPS USEFUL TO HAVE IOANNIDES' STATEMENT ON THE RECORD THAT HE ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS--AND DECLINES TO IMPLICATE THE USG--THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT A NUMBER OF STORIES HAVE CIRCULATED IN ATHENS SINCE LAST SUMMER TO THE EFFECT THAT IOANNIDES HAD ACCUSED UNDER SECRETARY SISCO OF "BETRAYING HIM" RELEVANT TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CYPRUS COUP. THIS ALLEGATION MAY BOB UP AGAIN WHEN IOANNIDES JOINS THE OTHER DEFENDANTS IN THE TRIAL OF THOSE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EVENTS IN CYPRUS LAST SUMMER. NO SPECIFIC DATE FOR THIS TRIAL HAS YET BEEN SET, BEYOND STATEMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT ALL TRIALS WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THE SUMMER.

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